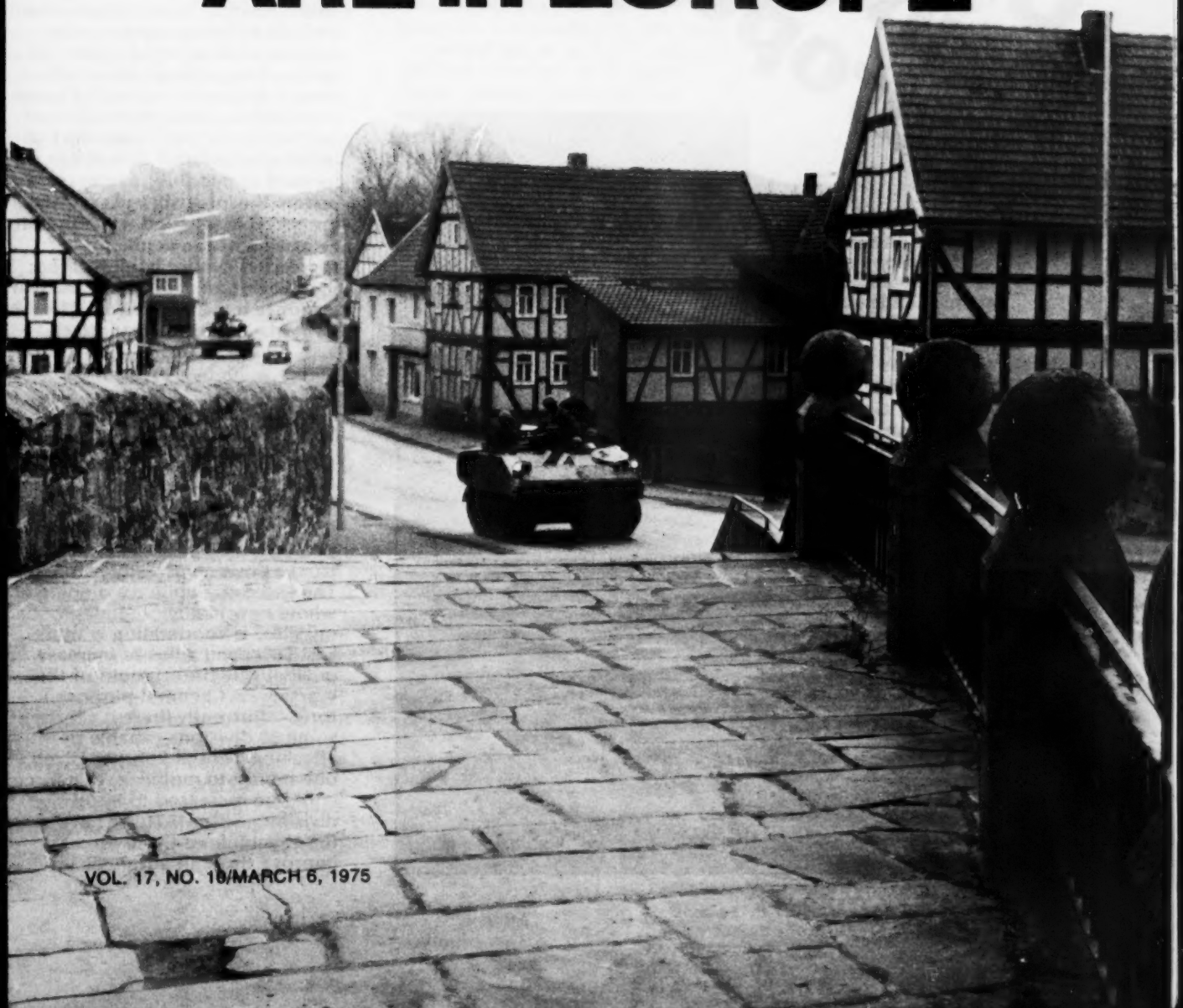
COMMANDER'S DIGEST

WHY U.S. FORCES ARE in EUROPE



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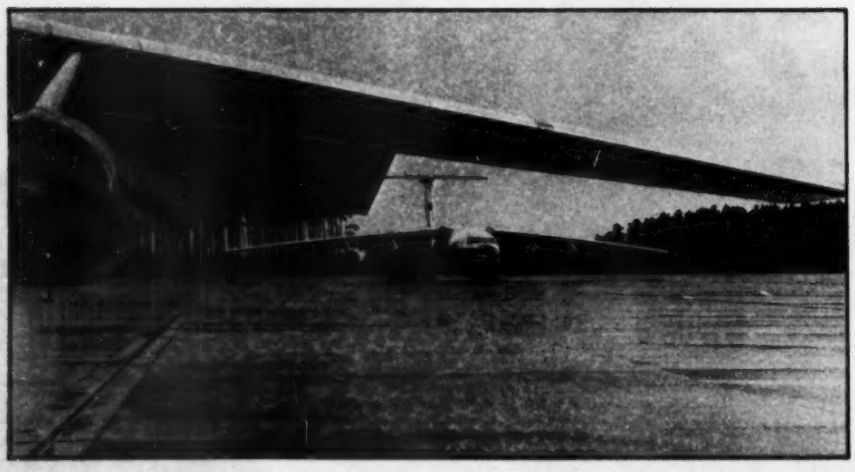
Why the United States Maintains Forces in Europe

By Gen. George Brown, USAF
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Army Artilleryman PFC Michael Jackson listens for his next fire mission during Laramie Golden Arrow II exercise in Germany's Rhineland-Pfalz. Below, an Air Force C-141 Starlifter is being readied at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, to transport troops during the NATO exercise Reforger IV.



Western Europe's strategic importance to U.S. national security interests is second only to that of the territorial United States itself in strategic importance. U.S. forces are located in Western Europe to contribute to an effective deterrent against the threat of U.S. interests represented by the conventional forces of the Warsaw Pact in Central Europe.

The best place to begin the defense of the United States is as far forward as possible. Our European Command (EUCOM) acts as a viable force protecting U.S. national interests, and through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Alliance, supports the mission of deterrence against all forms of aggression. However, should aggression occur in Europe nonetheless, then the mission of our forces will be to: **conduct an initial conventional defense as far forward as possible; preserve or restore the integrity and security of the NATO area; conduct deliberate escalation of the conflict if aggression cannot be contained; and provide an appropriate nuclear response if the aggression is in the form of a major nuclear attack.**

The Threat

In recent years, the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact have substantially improved their forces in Central Europe. Over the next five years, we believe they will continue to improve their military posture to be able to negotiate from a position of visible strength. The U.S.S.R., while developing a whole new family of strategic missiles, is cooperating with its East European allies to increase qualitatively the strength of the Warsaw Pact general purpose forces. Currently there is a force of some 58 divisions capable of attacking Central Europe. Given one month to mobilize, this force could be increased to 80-90 divisions. Since 1971, we have seen the capability of these forces improve through advances in

mobility, weaponry/firepower, improved logistical support, more effective command and control, and increased numbers.

A continuous upgrading of Soviet/Warsaw Pact aviation forces has been underway in recent years. The emphasis has been and continues to be on the ability of those forces to fight a conventional war in Europe.

Within the Pact, the naval threat is posed primarily by an emerging Soviet navy more capable every day of conducting extensive combat operations worldwide, as well as supporting peacetime political objectives. It is clear that the Soviet Union deliberately and resolutely is striving to develop a powerful navy. The home base of most of this force and its prime operating areas lie within the U.S. European Command area of responsibility from which it can seek to perform its mission of interdiction of NATO's lines of supply and reinforcement.

NATO, Warsaw Pact Comparison

Improvements in U.S. and NATO forces during the past several years have increased capabilities considerably, with particular emphasis on conventional warfare. The thrust is to avoid being forced into nuclear war as the only alternative to unacceptable losses in a conventional battle. Strengthening conventional capability will raise the nuclear threshold, but this requires a tailored force with capabilities adequate to both initial and sustained combat.

Toward this end, in the last two years, headquarters and support manpower spaces numbering 17,000 have been reduced—98 per cent of which are being added to combat units. An additional 18,000 "support" spaces will be eliminated beginning this year and added to combat strength in the theater. The ratio of combat to support ground force manpower has been altered from 58/42 per cent in 1968 to a current 62/38; and by the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 1977, it should be 73/27. As I have noted, we plan to deploy two additional brigades to Europe. This increase in initial combat power at the expense of sustaining capability can be accomplished only with some risk, but it is a calculated risk based upon the threat.

In an effort to reduce the risk flowing from a shortfall in essential support elements, we have been working with NATO allies to ensure adequate support. Overdependence on others, however, is not desirable. We must be careful not to upset the balance through reduction of support forces without obtaining firm assurance that their missions will be accomplished by other resources. To do so would result in a certain degradation of our ability to conduct a conventional defense which, in turn, would cause a lowering of the nuclear threshold.

Overall, NATO has the forces and equipment for a successful defense, particularly in view of the improvements in the Alliance's conventional capabilities now being implemented. In all three NATO regions, national ground

The U.S. Navy aircraft carrier USS Independence during operations in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea.

forces amount to 1.78 million, while Warsaw Pact forces amount to 1.62 million in the East European Pact countries and the three Western U.S.S.R. military districts abutting NATO territory. Pact forces, however, have increased by over 120,000 since late 1971, while NATO forces have remained relatively static. Pact increases appear to be related to upgrading of weapons systems, as noted above.

NATO tanks, while outnumbered by a factor of 2½ to 1 or 3 to 1, are, in general, superior to those of the Warsaw Pact, particularly in first-shot kill probability. Pact artillery, however, outnumbers that of NATO by a factor of 2 to 1 and the larger caliber weapons have greater range. With respect to available tactical aircraft, at the beginning of hostilities, Pact outnumbers NATO by a factor of about 2 to 1; but in general, NATO aircraft have greater range and payload capability, with crews that have better night and all-weather training.

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NATO's ground air defense provides an effective high- and medium-altitude air defense capability. In addition to conventional strength, NATO maintains an ability to carry out tactical nuclear operations in conjunction with the strategy of flexible response. Security measures for protection of weapons have been improved over the past year, and new devices and weapon designs have reduced the likelihood of unauthorized detonations. Our ability to conduct selective tactical nuclear operations would be enhanced by an improved and more survivable command and control communications system.

Overall, the asymmetries in NATO and Warsaw Pact tactical nuclear weapons and employment concepts enhance the NATO deterrent by complicating enemy judgments of possible allied responses. In either a conventional or nuclear conflict, however, a significant advantage to the Warsaw Pact rests in the initiative. The Pact ability to select the time, places, and nature of the attack requires great flexibility in defense by NATO forces. Currently, NATO possesses considerable flexibility in responding.

A broad spectrum look at NATO and Warsaw Pact capabilities reveals that NATO currently has a firm basis for successfully implementing the flexible response strategy, is aware of those areas needing upgrading, and is studying programs to ensure the adequacy of the defense. Improvements are required in the critical areas of force modernization, war reserve stocks, and resupply arrangements. Accordingly, NATO's air-ground team is capable of conducting an initial defense in Western Europe.

Military Balance by NATO Region

In the Northern Region, U.S.S.R. M-Day forces opposite Northern Norway outnumber those of CINCNORTH, but geography and climate aid in the defense, and

NATO can augment with troops and tactical fighters. NATO can control access to and egress from the Baltic through coverage by land-based air and mining, but Pact forces may be able to control the Eastern Baltic, employing air and naval forces to protect the flank of Pact forces along the Littoral.

In the Central Region, Warsaw Pact M-Day ground forces significantly outnumber NATO-assigned and earmarked forces. Counting all the forces of the NATO Central Region nations, together with the in-place forces of Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States, Pact superiority is reduced. Pact tactical fighters in the Central Region outnumber those of NATO by a factor of almost 2 to 1, but numbers of fighters with an attack role are almost equal on both sides.

Comparisons of NATO and Warsaw Pact capabilities in the Southern Region are complicated. NATO M-Day ground forces outnumber those of the Pact in the South almost 2 to 1.

Special Problems

Of note is Section 302 of the 1975 Military Procurement Authorization Act, which has had an immediate effect because it requires, *inter alia,* that U.S. military noncombat strength in Europe be reduced by 18,000 men by June 30, 1976. At least 6,000 of that number must be removed from Europe by June 30, 1975. On the other hand, the law allows the Secretary of Defense to increase the combat strength in Europe by amounts equal to the reduction in support forces. Specific proposals for implementing this requirement are being examined now. The bulk of the reduction must come from U.S. Army Europe units. The law has a narrow definition of combat units. As defined in the statute, the combat component of the Army only includes the infantry, cavalry, artillery, armor, combat engineers, special forces, attack helicopter units, air defense, and missile combat units of battalion or smaller size. Omitted from this definition are many military personnel whose duties require that they close with the enemy and apply fire to him, with all the hazard that this entails. This portion of the law dictates that combat increases must be made in front line battalion-sized or smaller units. Problem areas associated with the implementing of this law are:

- Stationing;
- Local training areas;
- Hiring of civilians;
- Costs.

Stationing and the associated problems of adequate training areas are the major complications we will have to overcome. Unlike the Continental United States, where large multipurpose military reservations such as Fort Hood, Texas, and Fort Bragg, North Carolina, provide considerable flexibility in organizing and training additional combat units, the U.S. Army Europe primarily is located on numerous small

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"Kasernes" scattered throughout Southern Germany. Most of these Kasernes are pre-World War II German Army installations established in the 1930s on the outskirts of major cities. During the past two decades, the German population and economy have expanded, and these Kasernes have become surrounded by industrial complexes, high-rise apartments, homes, parks, and the like. This leaves little or no room for expansion and creates a premium on real estate. U.S. Army Europe is faced with added requirements for training combat units when these Kasernes and training areas already are crowded. Support activities withdrawn under the law will free some facilities, but such activities are largely to the rear and do not have the hard stands, maintenance facilities, and maneuver areas required by tank, mechanized infantry, and artillery battalions. The construction of new facilities will require additional funds, and such funds will be extremely hard to find. It will be difficult and probably impossible to acquire additional training areas as well.

As support units are reduced, it will be necessary to hire local civilians to perform certain tasks previously done by military men, e.g., providing transportation, maintenance, and medical support. Whether these local nationals can be attracted in sufficient numbers for an acceptable wage is subject to some doubt. Inflation has struck Europe hard. In the past five years, the average dollar cost for local national labor in Europe has risen from approximately $3,400 per man year to almost $10,000 per man year.

It is estimated that negotiations with host nations on wages and fringes in FY 1976 will result in approximately the same rate of annual escalation of costs; that is, between 14 and 17 per cent. Thus, there are preliminary indications that Section 302 will cause an increase in the U.S. Army Europe budget. The European Command is now formulating its recommendations for the implementation of Section 302. The thrust of those recommendations—and the law itself—is a conversion of a sizeable amount of manpower from support to combat rather than a reduction in total strength. It is likely that the peacetime impacts of such conversion can be overcome by diligent effort.

Aside from the issues associated with Section 302, logistics remain of continual concern. Increased emphasis has been placed on logistical aspects of all exercises, to include U.S. unilateral and NATO exercises.

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Recent Accomplishments and Planned Improvements

Among significant accomplishments is the marked improvement in automated intelligence data handling systems as well as in the area of electrical transmission of imagery. The latter is of substantial importance both for the warning of potential enemy intentions and for the planning and conducting of military operations. Nonetheless, there is a need to improve further our capability to provide the right photography to the right man at the time he needs it. We continue to emphasize electrical transmission of imagery to obtain full value from our expensive, sophisticated national systems.

Among the other areas where accomplishments are noted, but in which further improvements are necessary, are communications in EUCOM. Communications are furnished primarily by the Defense Communications Systems, Europe, as a part of the worldwide Defense Communications System (DCS). The DCS-EUR, with organic, Service-owned systems, provides U.S. Commander in Chief Europe (USCINCEUR) with communications in support of the Worldwide Military Command and Control System (WWMCCS) and USCINCEUR's command and control, including information on: status of forces; surveillance; intelligence; alert/warning; consultations/decisions; nuclear weapons, custody and release;

reconnaissance; logistics; augmentation control/coordination between lateral and subordinate headquarters, SAS sites, airfields and combat elements within the theater. The reliance on outdated equipment and the lack of redundant circuitry in automatic switching facilities continue to hamper this important upgrade of NATO communications system.

Military Worth and Value of NATO

NATO has served and will continue to serve U.S. security interests. The Alliance has continued to carry out successfully for 25 years its mission of defense and deterrence while, at the same time, supporting solidarity and formulating the initiatives of detente. It has demonstrated that it is adaptable to a greater degree than is generally recognized.

The Alliance is beset by economic difficulties and marked by social changes. The cumulative results of these factors have placed pressures on NATO at a time when the Alliance also is faced with the difficulty of repairing the damaged security of the southern flank following the Cyprus affair. These problems do not lend themselves to simple solutions by the military staffs since the breadth and influence of their scope are highly pervasive and therefore fall in the political structure of NATO.

Common problems, such as inflation and scarce resources, demand economic cooperation, standardization, shared research endeavors, and a closer mutual look at common political problems. The problems, old and new, which are now arising exceed the classic military concerns, such as a massive land attack or confrontation. The continued solidarity of NATO and the composition of its member states are critically important assumptions underlying US military strategy. Any significant disruption or fragmentation of the NATO Alliance will have a profound effect on the US strategic outlook, and hence, the strategy for meeting the security objectives of the United States.

Atlantic

The Soviet strategic threat in the Atlantic is embodied in its submarine-launched ballistic missile force, including Yankee patrols in the Western Atlantic. The newest weapon in the Soviet naval strategic inventory is the Delta-class Ballistic Missile Submarine (SSBN) with its SS-N-8 missile. From existing Yankee patrol areas, the Delta could target the entire Continental United States, and from areas as distant as the Barents Sea, a Delta can cover any target along the eastern seaboard now being targeted by Yankee SSBNs.

Soviet general purpose naval units represent a substantial and capable force equipped with modern multipurpose platforms, weapons, and sensors. The primary weapons system of this force is the cruise missile, which is deployed on most classes of surface combatants as well as in submarines. A new antiship missile system, the SS-NX-13, is currently under development by the Soviet Union.

An important mission of the Soviet Navy is to counter the Polaris/Poseidon deterrent. In the Atlantic, the Soviet Union has the capability to conduct coordinated antisubmarine warfare (ASW) against the U.S. submarines, with a quality force of major surface combatants, fixed-wing ASW aircraft, plus other forces which are supported by capable intelligence, surveillance, and adequate command and control systems.

After the Polaris/Poseidon, the major naval deterrent to the Soviet Union is the aircraft carrier task force. To neutralize this deterrent, the Soviet Union is capable of utilizing Badgers, Bisons, Blinders, cruise missile/torpedo submarines, and conventional submarines plus surface-to-surface missile ships and Bear-D targeting support aircraft.

The Soviet Northern Fleet has the capability to conduct amphibious landings with a regimental-size naval infantry force, which could be reinforced by administrative lift of Soviet Army motorized rifle units. These forces could be brought to bear in Northern Norway or Iceland. Continued improvement of Soviet capabilities for sustained deployment can be anticipated.

Atlantic Regional Considerations

From the Soviet point of view, the Northeast Atlantic and the Norwegian Sea constitute the primary threat area for Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBM) and other seaborne attacks against Northwestern Russia. We see the North Atlantic air and sea LOC as the avenue for U.S. reinforcements and resupply of Western Europe. The Soviet Union maintains significant sea and air surveillance in this region, and its objectives in wartime almost certainly include denying us its use.

Because of its strategic geographic location in relation to the North Atlantic and Norwegian Sea LOC, Iceland is an element of major importance in the equation of Atlantic power.

By virtue of its strategic location, the air base at Lajes, in the Azores, is important to the control of the Atlantic.

Achievements and Shortfalls

The Atlantic Command must be able to contribute to deterrence in the face of the anticipated threat. The strategic forces can perform their mission.

In the area of achievements, the Atlantic Command's contribution to the Nation's strategic forces will

continue to grow as Poseidon-equipped SSBNs enter the fleet. In addition, the Commander in Chief Atlantic (CINCLANT) Airborne Command Post attained final operational capability on January 1, 1974, significantly increasing *CINCLANT's capability for* ensuring continuity of operations in the execution of strategic nuclear war plans.

In spite of the shortfalls noted above, the overall readiness of the Atlantic Command forces has remained constant over the past years. Also, Commander in Chief Atlantic Fleet (CINCLANTFLT) was able to deploy an impressive augmentation force to USCINCEUR during the Middle East conflict last year and for the mine-clearing operation in the Suez Canal which followed. Some problem areas were noted, however, particularly during the past two years, when it has been necessary to increase the level of naval units deployed in the Mediterranean in order to help counter the Soviet presence in that area.

Furthermore, the material condition of some of our surface ships continues to be a problem. It is aggravated by the shortage of enlisted supervisory personnel to provide routine preventative and corrective maintenance, and by the fuel crisis and increase in fuel prices which have necessitated a curtailment of fleet operations. *This, in turn, resulted in* inadequate opportunities to conduct at-sea exercises, type training, and individual ship exercises with a consequent *degradation in training readiness.*

In addition, our Navy has lagged behind the Soviet Union with respect to surface-to-surface weapons, but it is anticipated that a significant improvement will be realized with the introduction of the Harpoon.

Because of budgetary problems and inflation, antisubmarine warfare systems are not being upgraded as fast as they could be. Support of essential fleet training operations and base support requirements has been highly diminished. Substantial FY 1975 shortfalls in ship, aircraft, and base operating funds could have serious short- and long-term effects. It is anticipated that inflation and the cumulative effect of funding shortfalls in FY 1975 will negate the prospect of any substantial improvement in fleet mission readiness in FY 1976. In addition, personnel deficiencies continue, with serious shortages in certain ratings, particularly in the middle pay grades E-4 through E-6 of the electronic warfare and tactical missile technician and engineering rate areas.

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Strategic Problems

From the beginning of NATO, we have proceeded on the basis that the NATO Alliance would be able to control and use the high seas; *and up to the present we have* planned on the ability to carry out, more or less simultaneously, the full range of CINCLANT/SACLANT tasks, such as the conduct of operations to gain control of the sea; to contain the threat posed by Soviet nuclear-powered ballistic missile and attack submarines; to deal with Soviet surface forces; to protect the transit of the combined amphibious force and strategic reserves; to defend the Iceland Command, and finally, to defend merchant shipping carrying economic cargo essential to the Alliance. Reinforcement of Europe will depend on our first getting the submarine threat under control. This reinforces the Secretary of Defense's urgent action to have our NATO allies upgrade their conventional forces, including their maritime forces, which are essential as a complement to our own, and highlights the problems associated with reduction of prepositioned equipment required by a reduction in support personnel.

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